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February 27, 2009

Dear Sen. Crisco, Rep. Fontana and Members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:

I strongly support both **HB 6582**, an act establishing the Connecticut Health Care Partnership and **HB 6600**, the Sustinet health plan that would be comprehensive health care reform. This plan would be universal, covering everyone in Connecticut and it would provide high quality health care coverage which is a human right.

Having worked closely with people who are underinsured and uninsured, I have witnessed firsthand how challenging it is for families to receive quality care. I constantly advocate for people and families who did not receive high quality care based on the type of health insurance card they are holding. There are many challenges that families face when in that situation. They are not able to receive timely preventative care and due to the overwhelming amount of patients, visits are rushed not giving much time to focus on prevention and education which is important. This also results in many inconsistencies with medical records which results in poor quality care and patients being misdiagnosed.

Working as a Community Organizer for the healthcare4every1 Campaign has truly made me realize that our health care system is broken and time and time again, people are faced with the decision of having to choose between their health and providing the basic needs to their families such as food, shelter. In many cases, choosing the basic needs to provide for the family over health has resulted in death.

While other countries have declared health care to be a basic right, the United States treats health care as a privilege, only available to those that can afford it. Healthcare in America is treated like an economic good; not as a social or public good.

It's time for a change and Connecticut needs to be an exemplar. **HB 6582** would allow non-state public employers, municipal-related employers, small employers and nonprofit employers to join self-insured plans. This would result in significant savings for a number of these stakeholders. **HB 6600** - the Sustinet health care plan would allow thousands of families to have the right to quality health. Sustinet is a new proposal to make sure everyone in Connecticut has high quality, affordable health care regardless of pre-existing conditions, job changes, self-employment, divorce and other life changes. It offers a comprehensive benefits

package that includes dental and mental health coverage. People can choose their own doctors, and have the option of keeping their existing health plans.

Although we are facing challenging times in the United States, we need to prioritize health care because the price of not having health care would far exceed the price of having it. We all deserve quality health care, right?

We truly hope that you can focus on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Marissa Cardona

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